Model School Library
Framework & Guidelines

Idaho Commission for Libraries 2018

Benchmarks, Research, and Evidence to
Provide High-Quality Library Service
And Improve the Academic Achievement of Idaho’s Pre-K - 12 Students
Dear Idaho School Librarians,

Thank you!

To the school librarians who carve school library programs out of minimal resources, no budget, and limited work hours - you make something from nothing;

To the school librarians who get books into students’ hands in less than 10 hours per week – you make readers;

To the school librarians who piece together collections with no budgeted dollars with donated books, Scholastic dollars, and box-top proceeds – you solve problems;

To the school librarians who work to provide digital citizenship and information literacy curriculum lessons and check out materials in a 20-minute library class – you create critical thinkers;

To the school librarians who understand that information literacy and research skills must be taught and are not natural to the digital native – you make smart consumers of and creators of content; and

To the school librarians who provide access to the Vocabulary Vault to all students, particularly to those students with no access to books at home, even when it means pushing back against outdated policies – you provide the building blocks to a valuable education.

These benchmarks, along with supporting evidence and examples, are meant to be tools to support your case for making the changes you see fit for your library program. Use them as a check list, as a guide, and as a way to present the value of your program to your administrators and decision makers, to garner the support you need.

Sincerely,

ICfL
Introduction (or Do We Really Need Another Set of Guidelines?)

Yes!

When school libraries are mentioned in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), it is nearly always in the phrase “effective school library program.” But ESSA’s definition of “effective school library program” is not included. To fill the gap, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) developed the following definition that aligns with best practices for school librarianship, and is based on a large body of research that identifies the elements that make a successful school library:

An effective school library program has a certified school librarian at the helm, provides personalized learning environments, and offers equitable access to resources to ensure a well-rounded education for every student.

☐ Read AASL’s short position statement document. (include actual text as footnote?)

While some of Idaho’s school libraries are effective by this definition, a vast majority are not. For decades Idaho’s school libraries have been underfunded, understaffed, and often neglected. The job of building a sagging or nonexistent school library program into an effective library program might seem like an impossible task, but using this set of guidelines as scaffolding can help a school build an effective library program that supports academics, students, and teachers. Some investment will be necessary, but for most library programs, some of the supports are already in place.

School library support may be cut for any number of reasons, including budget crises and staffing shortages. A common underlying cause is a lack of understanding about the academic and social benefits provided to students through the school library. That is why for every benchmark listed, there is supporting evidence for, and real examples of, what happens when school libraries are supported, and when they are cut. Each benchmark also lists resources that can help a school library that is striving to meet it.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with recognized national standards like the Spell out ISTE standards and AASL’s National School Library Standards, which are teaching and learning standards. These are library care guidelines, rather than learning and teaching standards, that are meant to help the school librarian, faculty, and administration provide the best library service possible to Idaho’s students to help them meet their college and career goals.
How to Use the Model

The Benchmarks are organized into three phases: Phase 1 is developing basic library programs, Phase 2 is _______, and Phase 3 is meeting the requirements of an effective library program as defined by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). Each school library will begin at a different point in the Model, and build a program from there.

Using the evidence, examples, and case studies provided in the guidelines, librarians can build a case for making changes to the library program. Some changes require a financial commitment, and others require a change in policy, schedule, or other changes that have minimal or no financial impact. Decisions for some changes may be made by the school librarian, and some will need the approval of the building administration, or the superintendent, or the school board, depending on the policies and procedures of each school district.

It is best to start at the beginning with the Phase I Benchmarks. If your school library program meets those benchmarks, provide the required documentation in the Level I Verification Report [will develop the report later MOSee Appendix ___]. Then move on to the Benchmarks at the next level and work to complete those. Once it is determined at what level the school library program does not meet all the benchmarks, it is time to start planning. It is our vision that, benchmark by benchmark, all Idaho schools will have Effective School Library Programs.

These guidelines are a living document, in that as new research is published and new best practices develop, current information will replace older information in the evidence and case study sections. The benchmarks, however, will not be moving targets.

Two Approaches:

1. One way to use this document is like a checklist, taking on the benchmarks and working through the framework. And once After each Level is completed, submitting the documentation for the certification.

2. [Enrollment in a program that moves a library/librarian through the benchmarks/levels with supports/grant funds, CE Funds, etc. as part of the program, eliminating the need to apply for each thing individually. There would be reporting requirements involved, and that requires close partnerships with schools and school districts for access to data].

It is the Mission of the School Library to...

Before diving into the Model School Library Guidelines, read the local school district’s mission, vision, and any guiding principles that are published. Let those inform the school library’s mission, and any policies, procedures, and philosophies that are needed to develop an effective school library program. The mission and goals of the library should always support the mission and goals of the school and the district.
Many benchmarks in each of the three phases have the same heading (i.e. staffing, budget, planning, etc.). As a school library progresses through the model, the benchmark requirements for each phase moves closer to AASL’s Effective School Library Program, and so when the Benchmarks for Phase III have been met, the school library will possess all the characteristics of an Effective School Library Program.

[insert graphic representation of the model here]
Level 1: Developing Library Programs

School has made gains in making literacy a priority, and recognizes a strong school library program is a valuable tool to achieve that goal. The school library has become a priority and is recognized as a necessity rather than a luxury.

Benchmark 1: Staffing

☐ Benchmark Measure: A paid staff member operates and is primarily responsible for maintaining the library and library programs.
☐ Evidence of Best Practice: Students who attend schools with qualified, full-time librarians who run high-quality library programs achieve at higher rates than those without.

☐ A school library, under no circumstances, should be run by a person who is not an employee of the school or school district. Volunteers, while valuable and very helpful, should not be allowed access to school records, like library and circulation records, as it is an invasion of privacy and may violate FERPA Spell out regulations.

☐ The library’s collection is a valuable physical asset of the school. It is not fiscally sound to entrust the management of it to a non-employee who has not had training to select materials that are appropriate, high-quality and support the curriculum, nor to help students select appropriate materials.

☐ Support resources:
  o ABLE/Library Learning Online at [http://libraries.idaho.gov/ContinuingEducation](http://libraries.idaho.gov/ContinuingEducation)
  o Continuing Education grants covering tuition for library classes: [http://libraries.idaho.gov/cegrants](http://libraries.idaho.gov/cegrants)
  o Financial Assistance from the American Library Association for those pursuing careers in Library Science: [http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/librarycareerssite/gettinghelpfinancial](http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/librarycareerssite/gettinghelpfinancial)

☐ Case Study or example of success:
  Vermont law specifically includes school libraries and volunteers in laws on the confidentiality of patron records.

Bottom Line:
Hire full-time library staff for each school in the district. The presence of a librarian is especially beneficial to vulnerable populations who are likely to be caught in the achievement gap, like low-income students, students of color, students using IEP’s, and students whose are learning English.
Benchmark 2: Access

- Benchmark Measure: All students are permitted to check out at least two books per week to take home, with the option of visiting the library during a daily open checkout period to exchange books.

- Evidence of Best Practice: Excerpted from Striving Readers from Scholastic Research:

  Getting the right books into kids’ hands is the key that opens the way to strategic intervention strategies that work (Harvey & Ward, in press; Taylor et al., 2000), and—the ultimate goal—engaged readers (Guthrie, 2008). In What Really Matters in Response to Intervention (2012), Dick Allington reports on the striking findings of Guthrie and Humenick (2004): “When classrooms provided students with easy access to a wide range of interesting text, the effects on comprehension and motivation to read were enormous.” Easy access to books that students enjoyed reading had a profound impact on both reading comprehension (effect size 1.6) and motivation to read (effect size 1.5). To put this in perspective, an effect size of 1.0 moves achievement from the 16th to the 50th percentile rank. That’s hugely significant. As Allington notes: “No other features of classroom instruction were as powerful in improving both reading comprehension and motivation.” Guthrie (2008) explains in no uncertain terms what’s needed to help older striving readers: “In the end, if we truly want struggling readers to improve their reading skills, schools and teachers must take drastic measures. School districts must begin to put money into texts. By allocating funds for high-interest books and by adjusting curricula to allow for the teaching of such novels, they can take the first step in this important process. Individual teachers must recognize that it is more beneficial to have every student in a class reading a book—despite its content and reading level—than it is to teach Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar to half of a class while the other half becomes more certain that reading is not for them” (p. 74).


- Support to reach benchmark:

- Case Study/Example of Success: Read Inkom Elementary’s Case Study from Inkom, Idaho.
At Inkom Elementary, students check out and take home lots of book many times per week, and it shows in their reading scores.

**Inkom, Comparison Group, and State Spring 2010 IRI**  
**Percent 3’s by Grade Level**

![Bar chart showing percent 3's by grade level for Inkom, Comparison Group, and State.]

**Note:** Inkom: 28-44 students/grade; Comparison Group: 37-51 schools/grade; State: 349-364 schools/grade

**Bottom Line:**

Because easy access to books is the key to improving literacy, make sure students have finger-tip access to books from school. Remember, low-income students are unlikely to have books at home, and if they live more than about six blocks away from the public library, they probably are not using it and are less likely to use it. Consequently, for many K-12 students, the school library is their only library and their only access to books.
Benchmark 3: Culture of Reading

- Benchmark Measure: Library staff, faculty, and administration cultivate a culture of reading throughout the school.
  - Best Practice Evidence:
    Free Voluntary Reading is an effective and inexpensive strategy to instill an intrinsic love of reading, that is more successful than an extrinsic, reward-driven system.
    Read more at: https://www.psd1.org/cms/lib4/WA01001055/centricity/domain/34/admin/free%20reading%20(2).pdf

Or view this lecture at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSW7gmvDLag.

- Resources to meet this Benchmark:
  - There are a variety programs that are easy to implement in any school that can help cultivate a culture of reading that supports Free Voluntary Reading.
    - Dedicated time during the school day when everyone (meaning every person regardless of role in the school) reads. Experts recommend starting with shorter periods of time and working up to 15-20 minutes. It is often called Drop Everything and Read, or some variation Sustained Silent Reading. Read more about it at ____________
    - Read Across America: a national reading celebration that happens in schools and libraries all over the country every March 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Find more information at: http://www.seussville.com/Educators/educatorReadAcrossAmerica.php.
    - Young Readers Choice Awards from the Pacific Northwest Library Association. Since the 1940s students have been reading and voting for their favorite nominees. More details available at: https://pnla.org/young-readers-choice-award/
    - Idaho Battle of the Books: a reading comprehension competition in which student teams work together to answer questions about books. Find details on organizing teams at: ________________

- Case Study or Example of Success
Carey School in Carey, Idaho, infuses reading into every aspect of the school day, even athletics!

- Free Voluntary Reading works at Elim Elementary School! [Read this success story with FVR in Education World. Include link somewhere](#)  

**Bottom Line:**

Make peer pressure work for good! Reading comes much more naturally when it is the thing that everyone is doing. Something about taking tests about books being detrimental to developing a love of reading?
Benchmark 4: Budget

Benchmark Measure: An annual line-item in the district or school budget for library books and materials.

- Best Practice: Short- and long-term planning for an effective school library program requires a sufficient, stable, and regular budget on which the librarian can rely. While a library book budget may seem like a low-risk place to cut, short-changing library services also cuts reading and writing achievement for students. Inadequate school library service is a lost opportunity for every student, but especially those who come from low-income, non-English speaking, or non-white families, along with those students who use an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Collection development best practices recommend a school library book budget sufficient to purchase two new books each year per student to replace lost and damaged items, update weeded items, and acquire current materials. Best practice is ideal, but any regular budget can be helpful for long-term planning and to purchase items not available through fundraisers like book fairs, etc.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and UNESCO spell out recommend using at least 5% of the allocation per student exclusive of salaries, for materials for the school library.

- Best Practice Evidence: [https://www.lrs.org/documents/school/school_library_impact.pdf](https://www.lrs.org/documents/school/school_library_impact.pdf)

  The group of studies and surveys conducted in 20+ states across the country by the Library Research Service show that larger and collections and more expenditures on the school library program were positively correlated with better standardized test scores, even when controlling for student poverty.

  All the school impact survey reports are available at [https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/](https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/)


To read the entire article, visit: [https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2000/03/22/28libe.h19.html](https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2000/03/22/28libe.h19.html)

- Resources to meet this Benchmark:
  - [Elementary School Library Access Mini-Grants - Round 2. Include link](#)
Case Study/Successful Example:

**Bottom Line:**
Larger, high-quality library collections are strongly correlated with student achievement in reading, and other content areas. A regular line-item in the budget allows for long-term collection development planning and is the best way to support students with a strong collection, not to mention to provide access to books for all students.
Level II: Fundamental Library Program

Library moves from basic service to more involvement in curriculum for fundamental support of academic standards. In addition to the Level I benchmarks, a Fundamental Library Program meets the following Benchmarks:

Benchmark 1: Staffing

- Paid staff member with library-specific training and a paraprofessional certificate operates and maintains the library.
  - School librarianship and library management is much more than checking books in and out, and requires knowledge and skill. Good school librarians can juggle content, students, librarianship, and teaching, but that is very difficult without opportunities for professional development.
  - Best practice: staying abreast of trends and technology in school libraries requires time and effort, and should include library-specific professional development opportunities. School librarians should participate in at least one library-specific professional development or training opportunity each year.
  - Best practice evidence: school librarians who regularly participate in professional development opportunities like conferences, workshops, on-line classes and webinars, and networking opportunities will make the school library more effective, save money, and serve students and teachers better. In addition, the school librarian becomes a more effective advocate, infuses the school with energy, innovation, and professionalism, and ultimately strengthens the entire school’s reputation.

Evidence of Best Practice: NAEP scores for 4th grades decrease when school librarians are removed from a district and increase when school librarians are added. The studies that demonstrate these results have been controlled for other factors, such as variation of numbers of other faculty and staff. Students who are most affected by changes in school library staffing are English language learners, low SES students, black students, and Hispanic students.

Resources to meet this Benchmark:

- ABLE/Library Learning Online modules are available at no charge 24 hours a day at [http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/able](http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/able).
- Summer Summit: In-person training for School Librarians that takes place each summer in different Idaho locales.
  *When the completion certificates are earned for either of these courses, use the certificate to earn one opportunity to:
- Sit for ETS paraprofessional certification exam recognized by Idaho. For details on what to expect, where to sit for the exam, fees, etc., visit [http://www.ets.org/parapro/](http://www.ets.org/parapro/)
- Many other training opportunities and CE grants to support them are regularly announced on LibIdaho, Idaho’s Library Community ListServ hosted by the Idaho Library Association.

- Case Study/Example of Success:
Benchmark 2: Access

- Benchmark Measure: Library is open and staffed anytime students are in school, and librarian is not routinely required to fill in when others are absent, providing students open and easy access to library materials.
  - Best Practice evidence: Easy access to books is a critical aspect in producing proficient readers. Meta-analysis of 108 studies related to literacy showed that “children who have greater access to print material are more likely to have better attitudes toward reading, are more motivated to read, tend to read more, have better language development, show stronger emergent literacy skills, show stronger reading and writing skills, and demonstrate better overall academic achievement.”

- Resources to meet this benchmark:
  - While there are options and opportunities for library staff to obtain professional development grants, there are few to none for hiring staff and/or paying wages; that is a matter of prioritizing library service. There are reams of data, however, that show investing in library staff is a smart investment that pays dividends in student achievement and is a great value:
    - “In schools where student learning is a top priority, librarians’ roles include teacher, instructional partner, reading motivator, staff developer, information specialist, curator, and program administrator.”

- Case Study/Example of Success:
Benchmark 3: Planning

Benchmark Measure: Library staff uses proven and planned collection development practices, including developing and following a collection development plan for effective and deliberate use of budgeted funds.

Evidence of best practice:

Although each school, district, system is unique and must reflect the mission and goals of the local community, school library improvement operates most efficiently with a plan, policies that further that plan, and procedures that implement those policies.

-South Dakota State Library School Library Collection Development Framework
At https://library.sd.gov/LIB/SLC/LibCollectionDevelopmentFramework.pdf

Support resources to support this benchmark:
- Elementary School Library Access to Book Mini-Grant – Round 2 include link. Requires a 25% match from the school or district.

Case Study/Example of Success:

Benchmark 4: Evaluation

Benchmark measure: Library staff uses data to develop and improve library programs and projects.
- Evidence of Best Practice: Administrators use data when making decisions about where to provide resources. Consequently, in order to support the school and district goals with library goals, it is important to use data to show how the library program helps administrators reach those goals.

Support Resources for meeting Benchmark 3:
- In 2009 The Idaho Commission for Libraries published a School Library Impact Study, which collected Idaho-specific data on how school library service supports the education and school landscape in our state.
Library Research Service has done many School Library Impact Studies over the last 20 years, and all the reports, results and articles can be found at https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/.

Case Study/Example of Success: Omaha Public School District School Library Study: by building a case and developing relevant research questions, Omaha Public School District Libraries were able to gain access to the district’s student data. The goal was to use data to show the value of school library programs in students’ academic achievement. They were successful in accessing the data, and showing a correlational relationship between school library services and achievement. They plan to reevaluate every four years.

Benchmark 5: Data

- Keeps statistics like circulation, age of collection, class/student/faculty usage of materials, including digital resources.
  - Evidence of Best Practice: Keeping statistics on the activities and status of the school library can be useful for many reasons:
    - There will be ready information to show usage of your library by both students and faculty.
    - When it is time to plan programs, budgets, and collections, there will be relevant information with which to start.
    - When explaining the benefits of the school library program, there will be data supporting the talking points.

- Support Resources to Meet this Benchmark:

- Case Study/Example of Success:
Level III: Effective School Library Program

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act, an effective school library program is part of an equitable and well-rounded education for students in the United States. In a position statement, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) defined “effective school library program.”

As a fundamental component of college, career and community readiness, the effective school library program:

1. Is adequately staffed, including a state-certified school librarian who
   a. is an instructional leader and teacher,
   b. supports the development of digital learning, participatory learning inquiry learning, technology literacies, and information literacy, and
   c. supports, supplements, and elevates the literacy experience through guidance and motivational reading initiatives;
2. has up-to-date digital and print materials and technology, including curation of openly licensed education resources; and
3. provides regular professional development and collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians.

Excerpt from Definition of an Effective School Library Program, AASL

In addition to the Levels I & II Benchmarks, an Effective School Library Program will:

**Benchmark 1: Staffing**

- Benchmark measure: The school library has a full-time certified school librarian at the helm. Depending on the size of the school’s student body, a para-professional might also provide additional support.
  - Evidence of best practice: Each of the dozens of School Library Impact Studies conducted by the Library Research Service shows that Certified School Librarians are linked to higher achievement in reading and writing. A certified school librarian is shown to be especially beneficial to vulnerable student populations like low-income students, students who are black or Hispanic, students who are learning English, and students who have an IEP.  
  
  School Libraries Impact Studies from Library Research Service


- Support resources to meet and understand benchmark:
  - Since Effective School Library Programs positively affect the achievement of students served by Title I programs, in many cases the school district can use Title-I funds for Certified School Librarian salaries.
  - High turnover rates among administrators, and other factors, impact school library support and staffing.

- Case Study/Example of Success: Executive Summary of a Pennsylvania study building on 20 plus years of research on school libraries in Pennsylvania. Key findings were: When students with and without access to various library resources are compared, the following statistically significant relationships are revealed:
  1. Consistently, for all 12 library measures, students with access to these resources—a better-staffed, funded, equipped, and stocked, and more accessible school library—are more likely to score Advanced and less likely to score Below Basic on the PSSA Reading and Writing tests.
  2. A general finding of this phase is that the impact of school library programs is more pronounced proportionally for Writing than Reading scores. From the perspective of 21st Century Learner standards, this is not surprising. A 21st Century Learner must be a producer as well as a consumer of information. For Writing, students with access to libraries that have more of all of these resources are, in most cases, two to five times more likely to score Advanced than students without well-resourced libraries.
Generally, these patterns were found for All students as well as students who are Economically Disadvantaged, Black, and Hispanic and who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). In other words, these findings cannot be explained away by such socio-economic or demographic factors. (Detailed findings for these student cohorts are included in the full report.) Indeed, quite often, the PSSA results associated with stronger library programs are better for these students than for students generally. The relationship between test scores and quality school library programs, therefore, is not an incidental statistical artifact of more prosperous communities or families.

Find the entire Executive Summary at http://paschoollibraryproject.org/id.php?content_id=39592463
Benchmark 2: Access

“Genuine readers don’t turn in their books just because it’s library day!”

-Nancy Jo Lambert at Transform Your School Library

- Benchmark measure: The school library will follow a flexible or semi-flexible schedule that allows for the greatest amount of access by students and teachers, and on-demand individual and class use of the library and its resources, along with opportunity for collaborative teaching between school librarians and classroom teachers.
  - Best Practice Evidence: Flexible scheduling allows the library program to become fully integrated into the educational program, leading to students, teachers, and school librarians becoming partners in learning.
    - Position Statement on Flexible Scheduling from American Association of School Librarians at http://www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/resources/statements/flex-sched

- Support Resources to meet this benchmark:

- Case Study/Example of Success:
Benchmark 3: Budget

- The school and/or school district provides an adequate budget to maintain a current collection of materials to support academic, professional, and recreational pursuits.
  - Best Practice Evidence: 6 block data.
  - Krashen Access Data
- Support resources to reach this benchmark;

- Case Study/Example of Success
Benchmark 4: Collaboration

Benchmark measure: Library staff, faculty and administration cultivate a culture of collaboration.
  - Evidence of Best Practice:
    - Idaho Library Impact Survey
    - LRS School Library Impact Studies that reinforce the Idaho finding.

Support resources to meet the benchmark:

Case Study/Example of Success:
Benchmark 5: Standards

- Benchmark measure: Integration of state and national standards such as AASL National Standards, ISTE Standards, CTE Standards, and Common Core Standards that support effective library programs.
  - Evidence of Best Practice:

- Support resources to meet the benchmark:

- Case Study/Example of Success:
Benchmark 6: Equity

- Benchmark measure: Accommodate students with no broadband access or internet service at home through extended hours, hot spots, computer check out, etc.
  - Best Practice Evidence:

- Support Resources to meet the benchmark:
  - Technology grants?
- Case Study/Example of Success:

  Hot spot check out at Cd’A High.